



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Individuals with certain medical conditions now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine**

**Eau Claire, WI, March 22, 2021** – Beginning today, individuals aged 16 and older with nearly 20 different medical conditions, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy, and others, become eligible for vaccine. This full list of eligible conditions includes:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Down syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant, blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Liver disease
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30-39 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
- Overweight (BMI of 25-29 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Severe Obesity (BMI 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more)
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)

“We know that all three COVID-19 vaccines available are incredibly safe and effective at preventing infection, serious illness, and death. That’s why we are working to get shots in arms as quickly as we can,” says Lieske Giese, Health Department Director.

**How do I get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

If you are eligible for vaccine, you may be vaccinated through your healthcare provider, a local pharmacy, or the Health Department. Visit the website <http://bit.ly/covidvaccine-ec> to find information for ALL Eau Claire County locations that are currently scheduling vaccine appointments.

The site will be updated as new vaccinators have availability. **We strongly encourage anyone who is eligible to first check with their regular health care provider for a vaccine appointment.** Contact information for local health care providers and other options for people do not have a regular healthcare provider are listed at <http://bit.ly/covidvaccine-ec>.

If you do not have internet, please call your local health provider to schedule an appointment. If you do not have a health provider, you can leave a message at the Eau Claire COVID-19 Call Center and someone will return your call: 715-831-7425.

## **How soon can I get an appointment?**

The number of appointments available is dependent on vaccine supply. **Vaccine supply is increasing, but it will take some time for everyone to get an appointment.** You may have to wait for an appointment.

Signing up online will be the quickest way to get an appointment. People who are unable to sign up online may call for an appointment for any location. It is expected there will be long wait times on phone lines to schedule an appointment.

Based on the recent and anticipated increases in vaccine availability, Wisconsin DHS anticipates the general public will be eligible for the vaccine sometime in May. In the meantime, it is important to double-down on ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 due to emerging strains of the virus. Masking up, staying six feet apart, washing hands, and getting tested continue to be crucial tools for protecting ourselves and our communities against COVID-19.

Individuals who are fully vaccinated can review [recently released post-vaccination guidance](#) from Wisconsin DHS. For more information about COVID-19, visit: [covid19eauclaire.org](https://covid19eauclaire.org)

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